

Participant Observation Essay
DUE OCT 16

1. Attend a meeting of a political party, or a group that has some political goals, either on campus or in the community. (Since many groups only have meetings once a month, or less often, you will need to choose this group and ask permission to attend the meeting ASAP).
2. Observe how the group is run, the demographic characteristics of the members or attendees, and the substance of the discussion. What do you observe the group's goals to be? What do you think are the biggest obstacles to their success in achieving those goals? Are they aware of those obstacles? What could they do to overcome them?
3. At the meeting or elsewhere, interview the group's leader and at least two other members of the group. Ask them how they, personally, got involved with the group, how much of their time it takes, and why they choose to participate. Also ask them what the group's short and long term goals are, what resources they need to achieve those goals, and how they will get those resources.
4. Write an 5-7 page essay that **MAKES AN ARGUMENT** in answer to the following questions, relating your observations substantively to the material we've discussed in class:
 - a. What are the prospects for this group achieving its political goals?
 - b. How does it deal with the collective action problems it faces? Effectively?
 - c. If you were the leader of the group, would you do anything differently to achieve your group's goals?

Here are a couple of websites to get you started finding groups in San Diego. Try to find a group that you are actually interested in!

<http://www.activistsandiego.org/actionarea.html>

<http://www.sandiegorepublicans.org/clubs/>